

Mother of Evil

by

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INT. STEPHANIE'S KITCHEN - DAY

CRACK. SIZZLE. POP.

An egg fries on a hot pan. STEPHANIE KAZMA, 50's, begins shaking the pan to get the egg to evenly cook. She sports athletic attire.

CRACK. SIZZLE. POP.

Another egg drops into the pan.

Her morning routine continues. She walks over to sink and begins wiping off the food from last night's dinner. She moves with typical mom energy.

Behind her she hears footsteps coming down the hallway. She checks the clock, 6:40.

STEPHANIE
Somebody is up early.

LUKE KAZMA, 16, walks into the kitchen. He doesn't acknowledge his mother. His dark hoodie is pulled up over his head.

Just as Luke sits the egg yolks begins to run.

STEPHANIE (CONT'D)
Oh shoot. You don't mind your egg
scrambled right?

LUKE
Yup.

Stephanie plates the scrambled egg and places it in front of Luke. She grabs herself a cup of yogurt from the fridge and sits across from him.

Luke just stares at his food.

STEPHANIE
So, what's the rush?

LUKE
I just need to get to school
earlier today.

STEPHANIE
You got a test or something?

LUKE
No.

STEPHANIE

What then? You are usually, I don't know, so committed to your schedule.

Luke just shrugs. Stephanie decides to lay off.

LUKE

I'm not really hungry. Can we just go?

STEPHANIE

You have to eat.

LUKE

Mom, please. I just want to go.

Stephanie looks up from her yogurt. Luke's plea is too genuine for her to say no.

STEPHANIE

Ok, just let me grab my purse. I'll meet you in the car.

Luke gets up from the table quickly, slings his backpack over his shoulder, and hustles out the front door.

Stephanie takes one last quick scoop of yogurt before getting up herself.

INT. STEPHANIE'S CAR - DAY (MOVING)

Stephanie bobs her head to the cheery pop song on the radio. Luke sits in the passenger seat with his headphones in. His leg is jittering with nerves.

STEPHANIE

Hey.

Luke doesn't even flinch. He's in a different world.

STEPHANIE (CONT'D)

Hey!

Nothing.

She reaches across and whacks Luke's arm playfully. He takes out his headphones.

STEPHANIE (CONT'D)

Are you going to Chris' house after school? I got a second shift-

LUKE
No. Chris isn't coming to school today.

STEPHANIE
Oh. Why's that? Is he playing a little hooky?

LUKE
I don't know.

STEPHANIE
Is he sick or something?

LUKE
I don't know.

STEPHANIE
Ok, well anyways I can give you some money for the bus if-

LUKE
No, mom, it's fine. Don't worry about it.

STEPHANIE
It's fine I can just give you a few-

LUKE
I said it's fine. Ok?

The car pulls up to a red light. Stephanie stares at Luke. Something's wrong, but she doesn't want to make it worse.

STEPHANIE
Ok.

Green light.

EXT. TACOMA HIGH - DAY

STUDENTS hustle into the building. Buses and cars flow through the parking lot. Stephanie is about to pull up to the front steps.

LUKE
Actually can you drop me off by the gym? My, uh, locker is closer to that side.

STEPHANIE
Yeah, sure, no problem.

The car turns the corner. A couple students are smoking outside the gym door. Stephanie doesn't like that but doesn't want to be the narc mom.

LUKE

Ok.

STEPHANIE

Ok. Have a good day.

Luke gets out of the car. Before he shuts the door he hesitates, thinking about what to say next.

LUKE

Love you.

STEPHANIE

Love you too. See you when I get home.

Luke shuts the door. Stephanie watches him push past the smokers into the gym. She sighs.

EXT. FITNESS WORLD PARKING LOT - DAY

Stephanie steps out of her car. She bends over into the side mirror to check how she looks. She stares at her reflection in the mirror. She quickly brushes her hair out of her face and walks towards the large building.

INT. FITNESS WORLD LOBBY - DAY

Stephanie walks into a high class fitness center. Dozens of athletic middle aged women walk around.

Stephanie walks up to the front desk to speak to her manager, NANCY, also in her 50's.

STEPHANIE

Hey Nance.

NANCY

Hey Steph. Just in time, we got a class at 8 that needs an instructor.

STEPHANIE

Don't tell me it's-

NANCY

No, no they don't come in until noon.

STEPHANIE
Ok, perfect.

NANCY
How's Luke?

STEPHANIE
Same old same old.

NANCY
Ah, trust me, it gets better.
Stevey had this phase in high
school where he would just call
every girl a bitch. Bitch this,
bitch that. Now look at him, one
year out of O.S.U and he's about
to get married.

STEPHANIE
I know, I just worry.

NANCY
You are a mom, that is what you
are supposed to do.

Stephanie LAUGHS.

STEPHANIE
Hey, lunch later?

NANCY
Yeah I'll find you.

INT. FITNESS WORLD CYCLING ROOM - DAY

EDM music blares from the speakers. Stephanie is drenched
in sweat, her face grimacing with effort. She shouts to
rally her class.

STEPHANIE
Ok girls, we are coming over a
hill now. Get those legs moving,
lets go!

The class is full of similarly aged WOMEN. Some are
attempting to keep pace with Stephanie. Many in the back
are chatting while putting in minimal effort.

Stephanie doesn't care. She isn't doing this for them.

EXT. FITNESS WORLD - DAY

Stephanie steps out of the classroom soaked with sweat. She needs some fresh air. Outside she tries to stretch but hears sirens approaching.

Six cop cars zoom past the fitness center. They are headed back toward the high school. Stephanie stares as they disappear down the road. Weird.

INT. FITNESS WORLD JUICE BAR - DAY

The WOMEN gather around the counter for the real reason they came to the gym, gossip. Stephanie is now behind the counter, making the women their smoothies.

One of the leaders of the pack, MARY, begins to brag.

MARY

Well, Julie is taking the SAT again on Saturday. She got 1300 first try, can you believe it? She's just an overachiever.

The women give genuinely fake applause.

MARY (CONT'D)

Oh, Steph, how is yours doing? What's his name again?

STEPHANIE

Luke. Yeah, he is doing good. Still trying to iron out all that, you know, college stuff.

MARY

Yeah it can be so stressful. I feel like it's I'm fully employed trying to get Julie into Notre Dame.

Mary has never worked a day in her life. Stephanie knows this, but can't be rude.

STEPHANIE

Wow, Notre Dame. That's a tough one, right?

MARY

For most kids it is, yes, but Julie is basically a shoe in. If I do say so myself.

The pack of women let out a some scattered laughter.

MOM #2

Mikey is trying out for baseball
in a few weeks. I hope he makes
it, I heard the coach can be-

Her voice fades out as Stephanie focuses on the sound of the SMOOTHIE MACHINE. She can't stand to listen to all of this.

INT. FITNESS WORLD LOBBY - DAY

Stephanie runs to the front desk. The women are saying their goodbyes. Just as Mary is about to walk through the door she stops, she has a phone call.

Stephanie keeps an eye on them. Mary's face suddenly drains.

MARY (INTO PHONE)

Oh my god, Julie. Are you ok?
Julie?

Another mother grabs Mary's arm. The other mothers try to ask Mary what is going on but she is too stunned by what Julie tells her.

Another phone rings. A different mother picks up her phone. Then another. Panic spreads through the lobby.

Stephanie looks down at her phone. Nothing.

Mary rushes over to the desk.

MARY

Steph. Something happened.
Something happened.

Mary begins to weep. Stephanie isn't sure how to react.

Nancy runs over to the front desk.

NANCY

Steph, it's Tacoma High.

She points to the T.V. set above the front desk. The sound is muted but the news anchor is speaking with the Tacoma High logo superimposed on the background.

Stephanie's mind begins to race. She needs to leave now. She needs to find Luke. She needs to find her keys. Where did she leave her keys?

Before she can even think about her keys she sees a police car pull into the parking lot. The red and blue lights illuminate the lobby.

OFFICER MONTOYA comes in and walks right up to the front desk.

OFFICER MONTOYA
I'm looking for a Stephanie Kazma.

Stephanie doesn't really understand anything that is happening. She looks around before it hits her.

STEPHANIE
Yeah, uh, that is, that is me. I'm Stephanie.

OFFICER MONTOYA
I need you to come with me. Right now.

Officer Montoya leads Stephanie out of Fitness World, right past the tear stained eyes of the other women.

INT. POLICE CAR - DAY (MOVING)

Stephanie is still dazed. This almost feels like a dream to her.

OFFICER MONTOYA
Mrs. Kazma, did you notice anything different about your son today?

STEPHANIE
What? I, uh,-

The police radio blast.

POLICE OFFICER (RADIO)
All units to Tacoma High. Shots fired. Multiple-

OFFICER MONTOYA
Anything at all?

STEPHANIE
I really, I-

POLICE OFFICER #2 (RADIO)
SWAT is inbound. ETA 3 minutes.

OFFICER MONTOYA
Do you have a gun at home?

STEPHANIE
Do I- um, yeah? Yeah.

OFFICER MONTOYA
You do?

STEPHANIE
Yes. Yes. I do.

The siren blares as the car swerves through an intersection.

OFFICER MONTOYA
Was your son depressed? Did he have any problems at school? Bullies?

STEPHANIE
Was he, wha-, why are you?

But then it hits her. She realizes where she is.

STEPHANIE (CONT'D)
Oh my god. Oh my god. Oh my god.

OFFICER MONTOYA
Please, m'am, remain calm. We need you to be calm.

Stephanie begins hyperventilating.

OFFICER MONTOYA (CONT'D)
We need you m'am. We need to know about your son. Was he depressed? Any suicidal tendencies?

POLICE OFFICER (RADIO)
We need any medical units to converge by the gym-

OFFICER MONTOYA
Was he violent? Anything different today?

POLICE OFFICER #2 (RADIO)
Suspect has barricaded himself in the school's computer center. Northwest corner.

Stephanie can only stare at the officer. She doesn't know what to say.

EXT. TACOMA HIGH - DAY

It is complete chaos. Students led by Swat team members are being raced in the opposite direction of the school. On the front lawn four body bags are waiting to be taken away.

Ambulances are filing in and out. One kid, PETE VINCENT, is being tended to by a couple PARAMEDICS. His leg drains blood onto the pavement.

A news woman, CONNIE O'MALLEY, sticks out. Her beautiful made up face is a grim contrast to the tragic scene.

CONNIE O'MALLEY

What we know now is there are at least five students dead, potentially more wounded. Police believe the suspect has barricaded himself in the school's computer lab. They are unaware of how many innocents are trapped in there with the suspect.

Connie drops the facade for a second, angry with her camera man TODD.

CONNIE O'MALLEY (CONT'D)

Get a shot of that fucking kid.
That's gold.

Officers use their car as cover, trying to get a look into the computer center. A shadow moves across a window.

POLICE CAPTAIN

Hold your fire! Hold your fire! We don't know who is in there!

Officer Montoya's cruiser pulls up. Stephanie steps out and sheepishly surveys the carnage.

POLICE CAPTAIN (CONT'D)

Is this her?

OFFICER MONTOYA

Yes sir.

POLICE CAPTAIN

Ma'm, we have reason to believe your son is walled up in the school computer room right now.

STEPHANIE

Are-are you sure it's him?

POLICE CAPTAIN
Some of the students who got out
ID'ed your son, yes. I'm fairly
certain-

STEPHANIE
But not positive. Maybe the kid
just looks like-

POLICE CAPTAIN
M'am please. We are sure.

There is no use fighting it.

STEPHANIE
(Through heavy
breathing)
Ok. ok. ok.

POLICE CAPTAIN
We need you now m'am.

Stephanie can only meekly nod her head.

POLICE CAPTAIN (CONT'D)
We have tried to establish contact
but it ain't working. We wanted
you to-

BANG

The captain grabs Stephanie and pulls her down below the
police cruiser.

OFFICER MONTTOYA
Jesus christ.

A stream of students runs out of the front door of the
school. Tears run down some of their faces, others are
covered in blood spatter.

Stephanie peers out over the hood of the cruiser, her eyes
begging for Luke to come running out of the school.

SWAT OFFICER (RADIO)
Suspect is down, repeat suspect is
down. Self inflicted.

INT. HOSPITAL MORGUE - NIGHT

Stephanie stands outside the door. The hallway is empty and
completely still.

Two HOSPITAL WORKERS walk out along with the police captain. He notices Stephanie.

POLICE CAPTAIN
Thanks guys.

He shuffles over to Stephanie.

POLICE CAPTAIN (CONT'D)
If I am being honest, I don't
really know what to say.

STEPHANIE
Can I see him?

POLICE CAPTAIN
Not yet. The doctors are going to
clean him up, probably do an
autopsy, you know, the works.

STEPHANIE
Do you know when that will be
over?

POLICE CAPTAIN
No, can't say I do.

Silence.

POLICE CAPTAIN (CONT'D)
I'll give you a ride home.

Stephanie can just nod.

EXT. STEPHANIE'S HOUSE - NIGHT

A couple police cruisers are stationed in front of the house. Some yellow tape creates a barrier. A news van is parked just outside of the perimeter. Connie and her cameraman are lurking.

The captain's cruiser pulls up, a couple of cops let him into the driveway. Just then Connie sprints under the tape with Todd right on her heels.

As Stephanie opens the door the light of Todd's camera is already blinding her.

CONNIE O'MALLEY
Mrs. Kazma what can you tell us
about your son?

POLICE CAPTAIN
Hey, back off.

CONNIE O'MALLEY
Mrs. Kazma why did Luke do this?

Stephanie tries to hustle past them.

CONNIE O'MALLEY (CONT'D)
Mrs. Kazma do you want to tell us
anything at all?

The police captain finally gets between Stephanie and the camera.

POLICE CAPTAIN
That is enough.

TODD
Come on man.

CONNIE O'MALLEY
Mrs. Kazma, the people want to
know.

The front door slams shut.

INT. STEPHANIE'S LIVING ROOM - NIGHT

The house is dark. The red and blue lights flash against the wall. Stephanie is just standing there. She doesn't know what to do. What is there to do?

INT. STEPHANIE'S KITCHEN - NIGHT

Stephanie sits at the table. No food in front of her. She just stares straight down, right through the table. She hears the front door open.

An older man, DETECTIVE KEYSTONE, walks into the kitchen.

DETECTIVE KEYTSONE
Hello Mrs. Kazma. I'm detective
Keystone with Tacoma PD.

Stephanie just stares at him.

DETECTIVE KEYTSONE (CONT'D)
I get that this is tough, but I am
going to need to ask you a few
questions. Is that ok?

STEPHANIE
Yeah.

DETECTIVE KEYTSONE

OK.

Detective Keystone sits across from Stephanie. He opens up a binder and turns to a fresh sheet of paper.

DETECTIVE KEYTSONE (CONT'D)

So let's just start with the general stuff, name, age, etcetera.

STEPHANIE

Well, I'm Stephanie Kazma. Age, 51. I don't really know what else you want.

DETECTIVE KEYTSONE

Do you have a husband?

STEPHANIE

No. I am divorced.

The detective takes a note.

DETECTIVE KEYTSONE

Ah ok, sorry to hear that. You live here alone then, with Luke.

STEPHANIE

That is correct.

DETECTIVE KEYTSONE

How was Luke? What was he like?

STEPHANIE

Quiet I guess. He, he always seemed to be in his own world. I never really had to worry about him. He was, he was independent, I guess would be the word. I, he...

Stephanie can't finish her thought. Tears start to well in her eyes.

STEPHANIE (CONT'D)

I never thought he could do this. He was so, I just loved him.

DETECTIVE KEYTSONE

It's ok. It's ok. I just need you to try.

STEPHANIE

I'm sorry. I just can't, I am trying but I can't, this doesn't feel real.

DETECTIVE KEYTSONE

How about we just focus on today? Is that alright? Take me through today.

STEPHANIE

I woke up, started making breakfast. Luke came downstairs early, he was very regimented, but he was early today. Then I dropped him off at school, went to work, and well, yeah. Didn't really think anything of it.

Detective Keystone jots down some more notes.

DETECTIVE KEYTSONE

So, the gun, we ran it through the system and we found out it was registered to you.

This is news to Stephanie.

DETECTIVE KEYTSONE (CONT'D)

Any idea how he got a hold of it?

STEPHANIE

I, I had it for protection. It was in a safe in my closet.

DETECTIVE KEYTSONE

It's ok Mrs. Kazma, nobody is blaming you. I just want to know if Luke had access to the gun.

STEPHANIE

I don't know. Maybe. Oh god.

DETECTIVE KEYTSONE

Maybe? Did he know you had a gun in the house?

STEPHANIE

I never thought this would happen. I trusted him.

DETECTIVE KEYTSONE

You didn't know if he knew you had a gun?

STEPHANIE

I, I just...

DETECTIVE KEYTSONE

Please m'am. This is important.

STEPHANIE

I don't know.

DETECTIVE KEYTSONE

That isn't good enough. Think. Did he know about the gun?

Stephanie can't look at the detective. She stares at her shoes.

Detective Keystone leans back in his chair. He sighs in defeat.

DETECTIVE KEYTSONE (CONT'D)

It's alright m'am. It's ok.

STEPHANIE

(Crying)

No it's not. No it's not.

DETECTIVE KEYTSONE

M'am-

STEPHANIE

No, no just leave. Leave me alone.

DETECTIVE KEYTSONE

I need you to-

STEPHANIE

Just leave. Please. Just leave.

Detective Keystone watches Stephanie sob into her hands. He slowly rises from her chair. He takes one last look of pity before shuffling out.

The front door closes behind him. Stephanie let's out a rage filled SCREAM.

INT. LUKE'S ROOM - NIGHT

Stephanie ducks under the police tape and enters her son's room. Some objects in the room are marked with evidence flags.

She walks over to the bed, running her hand over the comforter.

On the side table something catches her eye. A picture of her, her ex-husband, and Luke when he was a toddler. The frame is dusted, Luke hasn't moved it in years.

Stephanie picks it up and uses her sleeve to wipe the dust off. The three of them are laughing at the beach, a typical family moment.

Her eyes look around the room, at the flags and the police tape. She is the only one left, alone in an empty house.

INT. STEPHANIE'S BEDROOM - NIGHT

Stephanie is still fully clothed. She lies sprawled in the center of her bed. The red and blue lights still shine through her window. Her tear strained eyes just stare at the ceiling. She is wide awake.

INT. STEPHANIE'S LIVING ROOM - DAY

Stephanie marches to the couch like a zombie. She lays down for a second but hears commotion outside. She approaches the the window and slowly peels back the blind.

There are now eight more news trucks sitting outside of her house. The police officers still hold a perimeter but all of the cameras are battling for view of the house.

Todd notices Stephanie in the window.

TODD

There she is.

The cameras all quickly turn in her direction. Before they can get a shot Stephanie quickly shuts the blind.

She sits back down on the couch. The phone rings.

Stephanie checks the number. It is unknown. She picks up the phone and quickly hangs up. She turns around and the phone rings again. She hangs up again. It rings and finally she unplugs the whole phone.

She gets back to the couch. She closes her eyes. Her cellphone starts buzzing. She grabs the phone and brings it to her ear.

STEPHANIE

What do you want?

NANCY (PHONE)

Steph?

STEPHANIE
Oh, wait, I'm sorry. People are
just calling and calling-

NANCY (PHONE)
It's ok.

An awkward pause.

STEPHANIE
I can't come in today.

NANCY (PHONE)
Oh, no, I wasn't expecting you to.
Are you like, ok?

STEPHANIE
I'm, I'm just trying.

NANCY (PHONE)
OK. Well, your car is still here.
You left your keys in the smoothie
station. Want me to bring it back?

STEPHANIE
Oh, uh, I don't know. There's a
bunch-

NANCY (PHONE)
No, no, it's not a problem. After
my shift I'll bring it back.

STEPHANIE
Thanks Nance.

NANCY (PHONE)
Hang in there.

The call ends. Stephanie decides to turn on the T.V.

She sees Luke's face on the news. A T.V. ANCHOR begins to
summarize the past day.

T.V. ANCHOR (ON T.V.)
16-year-old Luke Kazma walked into
Tacoma High School yesterday on a
mission. A mission to kill. Why?
Right now, we can't say for
certain. This afternoon the
governor will issue a statement
offering his-

Stephanie turns off the T.V. and tosses the remote across
the room. The house is silent again.

RING

The doorbell. Stephanie doesn't move.

KNOCK KNOCK

RING

There is a flurry of knocks at the door as well as multiple presses of the doorbell.

CONNIE O'MALLEY (THROUGH THE DOOR)
Please, Mrs. Kazma. We just want a
statement.

POLICE CAPTAIN (THROUGH THE DOOR)
Hey, you. Get off the property.
Now.

The sounds outside dissipate. Stephanie stares at the black T.V. screen.

INT. STEPHANIE'S LIVING ROOM - NIGHT

KNOCK

Stephanie is cautious as she looks toward the front door. She sits alone on her couch, a bowl of cereal sitting in front of her.

KNOCK

Stephanie slowly dips her spoon back into the cereal, trying to ignore the door.

NANCY (THROUGH THE DOOR)
Steph! It's me.

Stephanie jolts up and unlocks the door. A flood of camera bulbs flash as Nancy slinks through the opening.

NANCY
It's crazy out there.

STEPHANIE
I know.

Nancy reaches out and hugs Stephanie, who is slow to reciprocate.

NANCY
I'm so sorry.

STEPHANIE

Yeah.

NANCY

I can't even imagine what you are going through, all by yourself.

STEPHANIE

I'm just, I really don't know what I am doing now.

The two just stand in front of the door. How to have this conversation eludes them.

STEPHANIE (CONT'D)

Want a drink.

NANCY

Yeah, sure.

INT. STEPHANIE'S KITCHEN - NIGHT

Two glasses of wine are poured. Stephanie brings them over to the table.

NANCY

Oh, I almost forgot.

Nancy takes Stephanie's keys out of her pocket and places them on the table.

NANCY (CONT'D)

Sorry, I had to park like, a block away. The cops wouldn't let me get any closer.

STEPHANIE

It's fine.

NANCY

When do you think all those news trucks will leave? It's been like two days now, do you think they get you aren't talking?

STEPHANIE

Maybe I should.

NANCY

I don't know-

STEPHANIE

It's my fault. I should have been there.

NANCY
No, you can't-

STEPHANIE
I didn't even know him. If I had
just paid attention, maybe I could
have-

NANCY
Stop it. I'm serious. Stop. Nobody
knew. His friends, his teachers,
nobody said a word.

STEPHANIE
But I'm his mom. It's my job-

NANCY
It's your job to love and care.
Did you do that?

STEPHANIE
I tried. I really did. It just
wasn't enough.

NANCY
All we can do is try.

STEPHANIE
I need to say something. I have to
let the parents know, I don't
know, anything.

NANCY
You don't owe anyone anything. You
didn't do anything wrong.

STEPHANIE
I'm really not sure.

Nancy takes a swig of her wine. Stephanie can't bring
herself to look up at her, her eyes remain transfixed on
the glass.

NANCY
They are holding a vigil thing
tomorrow. I don't know if you
should go.

STEPHANIE
They need something from me. I
can't hide, not from what he's
caused.

Stephanie now looks up at her.

STEPHANIE (CONT'D)
I need to be there.

NANCY
If you need anything, I won't be
far away. You were there for me,
remember? When nobody else was.

Stephanie gives her a slight nod.

NANCY (CONT'D)
I'll always be here for you. You
aren't alone.

INT. STEPHANIE'S DREAM - NIGHT

An expansive black void. Stephanie jolts up. She is alone,
the void is silent. Suddenly a spotlight shines down on
another figure.

Luke. He is wearing the same black sweatshirt. Blood is
trickling down the side of his face. He is about 100 yards
away.

He just stares.

STEPHANIE
Why?

His spotlight goes out.

INT. STEPHANIE'S BEDROOM - DAY

Stephanie is scavenging through her closet. It is full of
workout clothes. She finds two dresses, one that is bright
red and one that is black. She caresses the red dress,
wiping some of the dust away.

She grabs the black dress.

INT. STEPHANIE'S LIVING ROOM - DAY

The sun is just peeking out over the horizon. Stephanie
checks outside. No news crews.

She relaxes and sits down. She turns on the T.V. On the
screen is Connie. She is doing a story on the survivors.

CONNIE O'MALLEY (ON T.V.)
Students are beginning the long
process of healing here at Tacoma
High. Monday morning's bloodshed
is still fresh in their minds.
Many of them are left with the
question, why would somebody do
this?

The camera cuts to JULIE, Mary's daughter. She is trying to
hide her love of the attention.

CONNIE O'MALLEY (O.S)
Did you know Luke Kazma?

JULIE (ON T.V.)
No, nobody really did. He was a
loner. Really weird. I wasn't like
mean to him or anything but he
didn't have like friends.

Next up is CHRIS, Luke's only friend. Chris is shy, his
face has a clear bruise resting on his cheekbone. His eyes
seem bloodshot, either from tears or lack of sleep.

CHRIS (ON T.V.)
I was Luke's friend. Probably his
only one, but that doesn't matter.

CONNIE O'MALLEY (O.S)
Did you ever think he could do
this?

CHRIS (ON T.V.)
No. Never. Most kids at our school
didn't know Luke. Most kids made
an active effort not to know him
actually. If any of them knew him
like I did, they would know this
isn't Luke.

Stephanie begins to tear up. She almost cracks a smile.

CONNIE O'MALLEY (ON T.V.)
Other students aren't so sure.

Pete Vincent, the child whose leg was bleeding onto the
pavement, is on a pair of crutches. He is dressed in a
suit. He comes off as extremely well spoken.

PETE VINCENT (ON T.V.)
My question isn't why Luke did it,
it is how we could have stopped
it?

(MORE)

PETE VINCENT (ON T.V.) (CONT'D)
Whether it was at home or in
school, how did nobody notice
this? I also wonder how he was
able to get the gun out of his
house and into school? Luke Kasma
was a monster, but we might have
created him. We need to think
about that.

The camera is back on Connie in front of the taped off
Tacoma High.

CONNIE O'MALLEY (ON T.V.)
Poignant words from class
president Peter Vincent. As these
days wear on we will be sure to
bring you any new information
regarding the Tacoma High
Massacre.

CLICK

Stephanie turns off the T.V. in disgust. She checks the
clock under the T.V. 6:00.

EXT. STEPHANIE'S HOUSE - DAY

Stephanie slinks out the front door. One news crew is
setting up outside of her house but don't notice her. She
is wearing a long coat over her dress and sunglasses,
hopefully to mask her appearance.

She shuffles down the driveway. Suddenly one of the CAMERA
MEN notice her walking away.

CAMERA MAN
Excuse me.

Stephanie turns around.

CAMERA MAN (CONT'D)
Yeah, you.

He jogs over to Stephanie. She turns and tries to speed
walk away but he catches up to her and grabs her arm.

CAMERA MAN (CONT'D)
Hey, wait up.

STEPHANIE
What do you want?

CAMERA MAN
Hey relax, ok? I was just
wondering if you wanted to be on
T.V.

STEPHANIE
What?

CAMERA MAN
Do you live in the neighborhood?

Stephanie nods.

CAMERA MAN (CONT'D)
So that woman in the house is the
mom of that crazy kid who shot up
that high school. You know her?

STEPHANIE
No, sorry.

CAMERA MAN
Damn, alright. You could even just
talk about the shooting if you
want. We are pretty bored over
there.

STEPHANIE
No, no. I really have to get
going.

CAMERA MAN
Ok. Thanks anyways.

STEPHANIE
Yeah, no problem.

She quietly slips into her car. She jams the key into the
ignition and before the other news crews can react she has
peeled out of the driveway.

EXT. TACOMA HIGH - DAY

The memorial is still being set up. It doesn't start for a
couple hours. Stephanie's car is parked in the back of the
empty lot.

INT. STEPHANIE'S CAR - DAY

Stephanie stares at the rows of flowers being piled on to
the makeshift stage. When they are put together they read
out the six names of the students killed, Ryan, Paul, Jill,
Tessa, and Becca.

A couple of workers are wheeling out a podium.

EXT. TACOMA HIGH - DAY

At the podium is Pete Vincent. He reads a set of written remarks.

PETE VINCENT

..and though they may be gone, as
a community we cannot forget them.
There legacy won't be how they
died, it will be how they lived,
how they affected all of us.

Stephanie sits in the back of the memorial service. A
COUPLE weeps next to her. She is in her dress but her
sunglasses remain on.

PETE VINCENT (CONT'D)

Now, as a community, we must heal.
I invite you to reach under your
seat and grab the small candle. By
row, feel free to come up to light
and place your candle on stage, as
a sign of remembrance.

Slowly people begin to stand up. Most of each row heads
towards the stage to light their candle. Stephanie remains
seated, palming the candle in her hands.

She sees that after each person places their candle they
approach the parents seated in the front row. The parents
of the victims.

She sees Chris, Luke's only friend, nervously go up and
light a candle. He keeps his head down, not looking at
anyone.

Stephanie gets up and gets in line. She leaves her
sunglasses by her seat.

As she walks up she starts to feel eyes being drawn toward
her. She hears the murmurs from the people seated. The
FATHER in front of her keeps looking over his shoulder.

She continues to move down the line and the murmurs begin
to grow. Some people are openly pointing her out now.

She gets to the stage. Her hands are shaking as she
struggles to light her candle. Nobody comes over to assist
her, the whole crowd just watches.

Finally the candle is lit. She goes over to the parents of
Ryan Nunan.

STEPHANIE

Mrs. Nunan, I am so sorry for your loss.

MRS. NUNAN looks up and sees who it is. She recoils.

MRS. NUNAN

What?

STEPHANIE

I am so sorry.

MRS. NUNAN

Get the fuck away from me.

STEPHANIE

Please. I just wanted-

MR. NUNAN puts an arm in front of his wife, like he is afraid Stephanie will attack her.

MR. NUNAN

Leave my wife alone. Nobody wants you here.

Stephanie looks up. It's a scene. In the back she sees Todd and Connie, camera rolling. Mr. Nunan stands up.

MR. NUNAN (CONT'D)

You heard me. Get the fuck away from me and my wife. Leave.

All eyes are on Stephanie. Her face pleads for somebody to understand what she was trying to do. Nobody cares.

Defeated, Stephanie runs back through the aisle. The murmurs return. She sprints past Connie.

CONNIE O'MALLEY

Mrs. Kazma why did you decide to come today?

Stephanie stops for just a second, considering whether to answer.

CONNIE O'MALLEY (CONT'D)

Do you think it would make up for what Luke did?

Her decision is made for her. She continues back to her car.

INT. STEPHANIE'S CAR - DAY (MOVING)

In the solitude of her car Stephanie begins to cry. The radio isn't on, just her and her emotions.

INT. STEPHANIE'S KITCHEN - DAY

Stephanie is seated at the kitchen table. A wine glass in front of her, she caresses the bottle of wine from the night before.

She pours herself a glass. She downs it.

Another glass. Gone.

She dishes the glass. Picks up the bottle.

She paces back and forth in the kitchen. Every couple of sips taking another swig from the bottle.

INT. STEPHANIE'S BEDROOM - NIGHT

Stephanie lies in bed. Bottle in hand. She stares up at the ceiling.

BZZZZ

Her phone vibrates on the bedside table. She drunkenly sways her head over toward the sound.

She picks the phone up, squinting to focus her eyes on the contact name.

"MARK"

Her ex-husband.

She throws her head back. Now is just not the time. The buzzing stops. Stephanie is about to put the phone back on her bedside table when it buzzes again in her hand.

She jerks the phone to her ear.

STEPHANIE

What?

MARK (PHONE)

Excuse me?

STEPHANIE

Why are you calling?

MARK (PHONE)
What do you mean "why am I
calling?" Our son is fucking dead.

STEPHANIE
Oh.

MARK (PHONE)
Are you wasted right now? Are you
serious?

STEPHANIE
Hey-

MARK (PHONE)
I should have never left him
there. You can barely take care of
yourself let alone-

STEPHANIE
Hey.

MARK (PHONE)
What Steph? What is it?

Stephanie pauses. She can't figure out what to say to him.

MARK (PHONE) (CONT'D)
Yeah ok. That is what I thought.

STEPHANIE
Listen, I don't know why this
happened?

MARK (PHONE)
Maybe you should, you were his
fucking mother after all. I should
have known you would fuck this up.

STEPHANIE
I'm sorry.

MARK (PHONE)
Yeah you should-

Stephanie hangs up. She lies down in her bed. She tries to
take another swig of the bottle, but it is empty. She
closes her eyes, resigned.

KNOCK

DETECTIVE KEYTSONE
(THROUGH DOOR)
Mrs. Kazma. We have to talk.
Please open the door.

INT. STEPHANIE'S LIVING ROOM - NIGHT

Detective Keystone is sitting across from Stephanie.
Stephanie sits on the couch leaning forward with her face
in her hands.

DETECTIVE KEYTSONE
Do you think you are ready to
answer questions now?

STEPHANIE
Yeah.

DETECTIVE KEYTSONE
Ok, perfect. Did Luke leave you
anything? A note maybe?

STEPHANIE
No, he did not.

DETECTIVE KEYTSONE
Are you sure?

STEPHANIE
What do you mean am I sure?

DETECTIVE KEYTSONE
Have you checked everywhere?

STEPHANIE
He didn't leave me anything.
Nothing. I have nothing.

DETECTIVE KEYTSONE
Ok.

STEPHANIE
Yeah.

DETECTIVE KEYTSONE
Do you have any idea of his
motive?

STEPHANIE
No.

DETECTIVE KEYTSONE
How often did you actually talk to
your son?

Stephanie picks her head out of her hands.

STEPHANIE
What are you implying?

DETECTIVE KEYTSONE
What I meant was-

STEPHANIE
What the fuck are you trying to
say about me?

DETECTIVE KEYTSONE
Why are-

STEPHANIE
Fuck you. I know I wasn't a
perfect mother. I tried. I was
alone, ok? I, I, I know-

DETECTIVE KEYTSONE
I just need some fu-, some
answers, ok? Your son killed a lot
of people and I need to figure out
why. I'm just doing my job and you
aren't making this easy. So please
just-

STEPHANIE
It's not exactly easy for me
either.

DETECTIVE KEYTSONE
You know what, I don't care,
really. I'm done trying to coddle
you. Your son wasn't a victim,
I've got 6 pairs of grieving
parents who want answers. I don't
care about your personal life to
be quite honest. Nobody does.

Detective Keystone gets up. Stephanie just stares blankly
ahead.

DETECTIVE KEYTSONE (CONT'D)
You won't be seeing me again. I've
got all I need.

He walks out of the room. Stephanie is left alone. She
falls back onto the couch.

INT. STEPHANIE'S DREAM - NIGHT

The same black void. Stephanie is awake again. She looks
across the way. Luke is there again, only 75 yards away
now. Stephanie's anger boils over.

STEPHANIE
I need some fucking answers!

Luke doesn't react.

STEPHANIE (CONT'D)
Can't you hear me!

Nothing.

Stephanie drops to her knees and begins to sob.

STEPHANIE (CONT'D)
Why? Why did you do this?

Luke's spotlight goes out.

Stephanie's curls into a fetal position and weeps.

INT. STEPHANIE'S LIVING ROOM - DAY

Stephanie wakes up curled on the couch, still in her black dress. She gets up and goes over to the kitchen. The refrigerator is basically empty, only a couple yogurt cups remain.

Stephanie grabs one and gets some water from the sink. She returns to the couch and sighs. She clicks the T.V. on. The local news is on the weather. Perfect. Maybe it's over.

The channel turns to Fox where the words "TACOMA HIGH MASSACRE" are plastered on the screen.

The graphic fades away to reveal Connie, with a glowing smile, seated across from a well dressed male talking head, CHET LOGGERMAN.

CHET LOGGERMAN (ON T.V.)
Chet Loggerman here with a special report on the shooting that rocked the country only three days ago in Tacoma, Washington. Here to join me is Tacoma's own Connie O'Malley.

CONNIE O'MALLEY (ON T.V.)
Thank you Chet, happy to help.

CHET LOGGERMAN (ON T.V.)
This tragedy really devastated America to it's core. The country wants to know why?

CONNIE O'MALLEY (ON T.V.)
Chet it certainly was a heinous crime.

(MORE)

CONNIE O'MALLEY (ON T.V.) (CONT'D)
Unfortunately we are still waiting
for a lot of the facts to come to
light.

CHET LOGGERMAN (ON T.V.)
I'm sure you are familiar with the
video making the rounds on the
internet. It is some gory stuff
that we can't show to you here on
Fox.

CONNIE O'MALLEY (ON T.V.)
Yes Chet, I saw the video last
night. It is not for the faint of
heart. To see these beautiful
young lives being snuffed out by
this monster, it is truly hard to
watch.

CHET LOGGERMAN (ON T.V.)
What can you tell us about the
perpetrator?

CONNIE O'MALLEY (ON T.V.)
Through my thorough reporting I
was only able to find so much.
Luke Kazma was a 16-year-old
prototypical loner. Very little
friends, came from a broken home,
you know the story.

CHET LOGGERMAN (ON T.V.)
Just tragic. Are there any early
reports on a possible motive?

CONNIE O'MALLEY (ON T.V.)
Unfortunately not right now Chet.
If I was to give my own opinion
I'd say to look at Kazma's home
life. His mother has been dodging
media for days and I think that
says a lot.

CHET LOGGERMAN (ON T.V.)
You think she is hiding something?

CONNIE O'MALLEY (ON T.V.)
She certainly seems like she is
guilty. Her only appearance in
public was at the town memorial
service.

(MORE)

CONNIE O'MALLEY (ON T.V.) (CONT'D)
 Listen, I understand it must be tough for her, but she has a duty to the parents to speak about her son. She has a chance to give these people some closure.

CHET LOGGERMAN (ON T.V.)
 People do really want to know more about Luke Kasma. He has been trending on Twitter for almost 36 hours now. We, as a country, just want to know why?

CONNIE O'MALLEY (ON T.V.)
 Exactly Chet, why-

Stephanie switches the channel back to the local news. She is in disbelief of what Connie just said.

Todd is now in front of the camera. He is in a suit and is standing in front of Tacoma High.

TODD (ON T.V.)
 Todd Knowles filling in for Connie O'Malley here. Earlier today, Governor Thomas came to speak at Tacoma High.

On the screen GOVERNOR THOMAS is shown in front of the school speaking into a microphone.

TODD (V.O)
 The governor gave his condolences to the families of the six victims. His speech was interrupted though by a group of student protestors.

On the screen is a group of students led by Pete Vincent. Vincent carries a megaphone in one hand while balancing on his crutches.

PETE VINCENT (ON T.V.)
 We want reform. We want new gun laws. We want to be the last school shooting in Washington. We want to be the last school shooting in this country.

The crowd of students cheer. Governor Thomas starts to grab at his collar.

GOVERNOR THOMAS (ON T.V.)
I understand your frustrations. I really do. I will do everything in my power to make sure all of our children are safe in our schools.

Back to Todd standing in front of the school with a half smirk.

TODD (ON T.V.)
Governor Thomas vowed to bring new gun legislation up in the coming weeks. Many have criticized his lack of action so far, citing his ties to the N.R.A as a reason for dragging his feet. I can't speak to that but all I know is, something has to change in Tacoma. I'm Todd Knowles, Fox News 12.

Stephanie watches as an upbeat fast food commercial starts to play.

EXT. STEPHANIE'S HOUSE - DAY

News vans begin to reappear. Eight now sit outside of her house. There are a couple officers keeping them off the property so they resort to yelling their questions from the street.

TODD
Mrs. Kazma, any comment on Connie's accusation that you have something to hide?

LOCAL REPORTER #2
Mrs. Kazma, why do you refuse to speak to the media?

LOCAL REPORTER #3
Why did Luke do this? Was he bullied?

LOCAL REPORTER #2
Mrs. Kazma! Mrs. Kazma, your son is the new face of school shootings.

NATIONAL REPORTER
The whole country wants to know about your son.

INT. STEPHANIE'S LIVING ROOM - DAY

Stephanie sits down on the floor under the window, out of view of the media. She can hear all of their questions. She pulls her knees into her chest and cries.

EXT. STEPHANIE'S HOUSE - DAY

Back outside the reporters are losing steam. Their yells dissipate.

One of the local reporters leans over to the National Reporter.

LOCAL REPORTER #1
You think she's ever going to talk?

NATIONAL REPORTER
She has to. With all this, she has to speak. I know I'm not leaving until I have something to show the guys back in New York.

LOCAL REPORTER #2
Yeah, they always talk. Just have to keep the pressure on.

In the back of the crowd is a boy, Chris. His hood is pulled up to make his identity. Nobody seems to notice him. He pulls an envelope out of his pocket, he looks at it and then at everyone around him.

He turns and walks away.

INT. STEPHANIE'S KITCHEN - NIGHT

Stephanie palms her phone in her hands. She is struggling with the idea of calling.

She types in a couple numbers.

No.

Deletes all of them.

She puts her phone down. She gets up out of her chair to leave the room. She makes it to the other fridge before turning around and quickly dialing. No thinking.

She waits. Her leg jitters. She bites her lip.

STEPHANIE

Hi, yeah. Is this Channel 12? Oh,
yeah I'll hold.

Stephanie sits back down at the table. She taps her fingers
on the wood.

STEPHANIE (CONT'D)

Hi, yeah. This is Stephanie Kazma.
Yes. Yes. I am trying to get in
touch with Mrs. O'Malley.

INT. STEPHANIE'S BEDROOM - NIGHT

Stephanie lies in bed with her laptop. She goes to Google
and types in "Tacoma High School".

Dozens of headlines appear on screen.

"Who is Luke Kazma?"- CNN

"The Child Behind the Monster"- N.Y. Times

"Tacoma High Killer"- FOX

Stephanie stares at these. Her son's lasting legacy spelled
out on the screen.

"Security Video from Tacoma High: WARNING GRAPHIC"

Stephanie's cursor hovers over the video. A black and white
thumbnail shows a child with a pistol in a school hallway.
She can't even tell if it's Luke.

She clicks the video. Her eyes react to the screen, darting
from left to right.

Suddenly she slams her eyes shut. She pauses the video.
Luke stands in the hallway, alone. He hasn't fired a shot
yet, he's just staring at the security camera, like he
knows she is watching.

Stephanie scrolls down to the bottom of the page to find
comments.

"Luke Kazma is a monster."

"Rot in hell."

"Fuck Luke Kazma"

"WHAT A PUSSY"

Her eyes are drawn to one comment in particular.

"Who raised this fuck. I hope his parents fucking die."

Stephanie is transfixed on this comment. She clicks the button to reply. She types

"Hello, this is Luke's mother,..."

She stops. Deletes the text. Backs out to the Google homepage.

She types in "Stephanie Kazma"

Not as many headlines pop up but the first few are jarring.

"Mother of Killer Stays Silent"- FOX NEWS

"Tacoma High Killer Came From Broken Home" - CNBC

"Stephanie Kazma: Crisis Actor Confirmed"- Infowars

Stephanie's cursor hovers over the first headline. She can't bring herself to look.

She shuts her laptop, plunging the whole room into darkness.

She walks over to the window. There aren't any news vans in front of her house. She looks at her clock. 2:13.

EXT. STEPHANIE'S HOUSE - NIGHT

Stephanie slips out of the front door. She is dressed to go for a run. She walks to the end of her driveway and peers down each end of the street. Nobody.

Stephanie jogs down the street, breathing with each step. Her legs churn, her eyes just focused on the road ahead. It is almost normal, just her average jog.

EXT. SIDE ROAD - NIGHT

Stephanie's jog has taken her across town. She turns down a side road. At the other end of the road a pair of headlights appear. Stephanie stops.

The car is coming toward her. She doesn't want to be seen. She quickly turns in the other direction and begins sprinting.

She goes back the way she came and takes a quick right before crouching behind a bench.

The car pulls around the corner and heads in the opposite direction.

Stephanie sits down on the grass next to the bench. She catches her breath.

EXT. TACOMA HIGH - NIGHT

Stephanie stands in front of the school, shrouded in shadow. She really wants to go in. She wants to see it for herself.

But she can't.

She keeps running.

EXT. CHRIS' HOUSE - NIGHT

Stephanie's run takes her to Chris' house. It is completely dark. She catches her breath from the sidewalk before walking up to the front door.

She rings the doorbell.

A light on the top floor goes on. The curtains get pulled back, Chris' mom, LINA, looks down at Stephanie.

After a couple more seconds of waiting the door opens up just a crack.

LINA

Oh my, Steph. What are you doing here?

STEPHANIE

Is Chris here?

LINA

Do you know what time it is?

STEPHANIE

I just need to ask him something. Please.

LINA

Steph, are you ok? Should I call-

STEPHANIE

No, no. I just want to talk to Chris.

From the stairs Lina's husband, KYLE, yells.

KYLE (O.S)
What is going on?

LINA
Nothing.

KYLE (O.S)
Who the hell is outside? It is 4
in the god damn-

LINA
It is nothing go to bed Kyle,
christ.

STEPHANIE
Please. Just for a couple minutes.

LINA
Steph, come on.

Stephanie twitches in anxiety. She just wants a chance to
get some answers.

LINA (CONT'D)
Look, even if it wasn't 4 A.M.,
Chris doesn't want to talk. He, he
is having a rough time at school.
It's not easy when you were the
kill- the... Luke's only friend.

STEPHANIE
I just don't know what to do. I
just, I don't know.

LINA
Do you need a ride home?

Stephanie shakes her head no. She turns back down the
walkway and shuffles away. Before she starts jogging again
she looks back at the house to see Lina still staring at
her.

Just above her another room is now illuminated by light.
She sees Chris, face still bruised, peering out at her. She
turns her attention towards him and mouths

STEPHANIE
I'm sorry.

She jogs off back in the direction she came.

INT. CHRIS' ROOM - NIGHT

Chris watches as Stephanie jogs away. He looks scared.

He turns back over to his desk. He flips on the lamp, illuminating a pile of notebooks.

He pushes them all away to reveal the envelope. He picks it up and studies it again.

Chris hears his mom coming back up the stairs. He shoves the envelope back under the notebooks.

He hops back into his bed, pulls the covers over his head.

Chris' door opens, his mom peeks her head in. She notices the lamp is on. She walks in and turns the lamp off. She goes over to the bed and lays on kiss on her son's head.

EXT. STEPHANIE'S HOUSE - DAY

Nancy is standing in front of the door holding a paper bag. The door unlocks.

NANCY

Hey.

STEPHANIE

Oh, hi.

NANCY

Mind if I come in?

STEPHANIE

Yeah, sure.

INT. STEPHANIE'S KITCHEN - DAY

Nancy walks into the house and notices a pile of mail has built up on the floor.

She brings the bag into the kitchen. She opens the fridge and is surprised to see that it is empty.

NANCY

Haven't been able to get to the store?

Stephanie sits down at the table. She just shrugs.

NANCY (CONT'D)

I heard about the press conference.

STEPHANIE

Yeah.

NANCY
You shouldn't do it.

STEPHANIE
I don't know.

NANCY
What?

STEPHANIE
I think she's right. I owe the families some sort of explanation.

NANCY
You can't keep tearing yourself up like this. You didn't hurt anybody.

STEPHANIE
That's not true.

NANCY
If I didn't truly think that, I wouldn't be here. Look at yourself.

Nancy motions to the house.

NANCY (CONT'D)
You are crumbling.

STEPHANIE
No, I, I'm searching..

NANCY
What?

STEPHANIE
I just need them to stop. Ok? I need to get them to leave us alone.

NANCY
That's a bad idea.

STEPHANIE
Maybe. But I need to do this. I need to give them something.

NANCY
Steph, please. You aren't in debt to these people. It could have been anyone.

STEPHANIE

No it couldn't. It was me. Now I have to face it.

NANCY

No you don't.

STEPHANIE

Nance.

Stephanie stares right into Nancy's eyes.

NANCY

Do you have anything prepared, like a statement.

STEPHANIE

No. I don't need one. I'll just tell the truth.

NANCY

Steph come on. They don't care about the truth. They want you, and you are serving yourself up on a platter. I know a guy who can-

STEPHANIE

No. I don't need a guy.

NANCY

I think you do.

STEPHANIE

I really don't. I don't need somebody telling me what to say. I knew Luke.

NANCY

You can't just go up there with nothing. I just can't let you do that.

STEPHANIE

They just want the truth, just like me.

NANCY

They don't want the truth. Quit telling yourself that. This can't help. This-

STEPHANIE

I can't sit back. They are killing me, and they are killing Luke. They won't leave.

Stephanie is starting to break down.

STEPHANIE (CONT'D)
My life is over. This is who I am
now. I can never be anything other
than the mother of a killer. I
just need to talk to them.

Nancy hustles over to Stephanie and wraps her arms around her. Stephanie would cry if she could, but her tears are long gone. She just takes deep, pained breaths.

NANCY
It's not your fault. Listen, if
this press conference will help
you realize that, I'll be there,
right next to you.

Stephanie squeezes Nancy. The two friends embrace.

STEPHANIE
You are all I have.

INT. STEPHANIE'S DREAM - NIGHT

Stephanie returns to the black void. Luke is closer again. Stephanie can now make out the bullet wound in the side of his head.

Luke continues to just stare. His eye's looking at Stephanie but not seeing her.

STEPHANIE
I'm trying ok.

Luke doesn't react.

STEPHANIE (CONT'D)
I don't know what they want from
me.

Luke's mouth moves but sounds don't come out. His lips are forming words Stephanie can't understand.

STEPHANIE (CONT'D)
I can't hear you. Luke please.

She tries to move closer to Luke but he always stays about 50 yards away.

STEPHANIE (CONT'D)
Luke, please, I'm sorry.

The lights shut off on Luke. Stephanie is left alone in the void.

STEPHANIE (CONT'D)

Please.

EXT. STEPHANIE'S HOUSE - NIGHT

A car without its lights on pulls up outside. A female's figure is shrouded in darkness. She slowly tiptoes up to the front porch.

She pulls an envelope out of her pocket. She looks down at it again. Then back up at the door.

She slides the envelope through the mail slot.

The porch light turns on, illuminating Mary, the mother from Fitness World.

She turns and jogs back to her car.

Stephanie opens the door only to see the car screeching off into the night. She checks around the house to make sure nobody is waiting.

She returns inside.

INT. STEPHANIE'S KITCHEN - DAY

Stephanie enters the kitchen in her pajamas. She grabs some of the leftovers that Nancy left. She pushes the pasta onto a plate and stuffs it into the microwave.

As the machine whirs Stephanie looks toward the front door. The pile of mail stares back at her.

BEEP BEEP BEEP

The food is ready.

Stephanie sits down at the table. Before she starts eating she heads over to the pile of mail. She scoops up a couple envelopes to read while eating.

She checks the first address and then rips it open.

"Dear Mother of Evil,..."

Stephanie tosses the letter onto the ground.

She picks up another one. She peels open the envelope. A folded piece of paper falls out.

Stephanie unfolds the letter.

"I know where you live..."

She stares, eyes wide in fear. She throws the letter across the table. She takes her arms and pushes the rest of the letters onto the floor.

Stephanie drags a trash can over and begins throwing letters inside.

One letter catches her eye. She checks the return address.

"Mary Williamson, 2114 Wales Blvd. Tacoma, Washington"

Julie's mom.

Stephanie tears open the envelope.

"Dear Murderer,..."

Stephanie puts a hand to her mouth. Shaking her head in disbelief. Her eyes scan the letter. Tears welling up.

In a fit of rage Stephanie slams the letter onto the ground. She picks it up only to tear it into pieces.

Once the letter is sufficiently destroyed Stephanie is left sitting on her kitchen floor, breathing heavily, surrounded by the rest of the hate mail.

INT. STEPHANIE'S BEDROOM - DAY

Stephanie is going through her closet, trying to decided what to wear to the press conference. It comes back down to the black and red dresses.

Stephanie pulls both of them out and lays them on the bed. She stares at them.

INT. STEPHANIE'S BATHROOM - DAY

She is sporting the red dress. Stephanie looks at herself in the mirror. The dress looks good, but her attention turns to her face.

Stephanie creeps closer to the mirror, staring at her reflection. The bags under her eyes, her cracked lips, her unmade hair.

It is like Stephanie is looking at an alien. She brings her hand up to touch her face. This is who she is now, it is what she has become.

She turns the sink on, takes some water in her hands, and splashes it on her face.

EXT. STEPHANIE'S HOUSE - DAY

News vans pull up to the front yard. About a dozen reporters, including Connie, prepare themselves for the show.

The camera men begin to circle around the front door, vying for the best shot.

There is a nervous energy in the air. Nobody quite knows how this will go.

INT. STEPHANIE'S LIVING ROOM - DAY

Stephanie stands inside of the front door. She is taking deep breaths.

A hand rest on her shoulder.

NANCY (O.S)
Are you ok?

Stephanie nods.

NANCY
If you need to get out of there,
just shoot me a look.

Stephanie closes her eyes. She tries to slow down her breathing.

NANCY (CONT'D)
You got it?

STEPHANIE
Yeah.

NANCY
Ok.

Stephanie turns back toward Nancy. She give her a hug.

STEPHANIE
Thank you.

NANCY
It's nothing.

They break their embrace. Stephanie turns back toward the front door, takes a deep breath, and twist the handle.

EXT. STEPHANIE'S HOUSE - DAY

Dozens of flashbulbs explode as Stephanie shuffles out of her house. Her eyes squint as the lights blind her. Nancy steps out behind her, putting her hand on her shoulder.

The murmur among the reporters ceases as Stephanie steps up to the podium. The amount of microphones placed on it is intimidating.

She looks up again at the gallery of reporters. All their eyes are trained on her.

There is an eerie silence now. The hum of the lights is the only sound aside from a few scattered camera shutters.

Stephanie collects herself, looks down at the statement in front of her, and begins.

STEPHANIE

Hi, uh, hello. My name is
Stephanie Kazma, I am the mother
of Luke Kazma.

A couple camera flashes.

STEPHANIE (CONT'D)

My son, my son committed a heinous
act. There isn't anything more I
can say. Nothing I can say can
change that. I can't go back, as
much as I wish I could. I wanted
to speak today in order to offer
my sincerest condolences-

Stephanie's eyes well up with tears.

STEPHANIE (CONT'D)

To the families that were affected
by the actions of my son. I am
sorry for the pain he caused you.

She is able to collect herself.

STEPHANIE (CONT'D)

This wasn't the Luke I knew. I
knew him as a quiet, respectful
boy. I love him. He was my life.
This wasn't the real him. I hope
that you all can recognize that.
He was a person too. Thank you.

Stephanie begins to turn around.

REPORTER #1
Mrs. Kazma was Luke depressed?

Nancy steps to the mic.

NANCY
Sorry we aren't-

Stephanie cuts her off.

STEPHANIE
Not to my knowledge, no.

REPORTER #2
No suicidal tendencies?

Before she can answer.

REPORTER #1
Did he leave you a note?

STEPHANIE
No, he did not.

REPORTER #2
Was Luke ever violent?

STEPHANIE
Never. He wasn't a violent kid.

This contradiction elicits some mutters from the gallery.

NATIONAL REPORTER
Did he play video games?

STEPHANIE
What?

NATIONAL REPORTER
Did he play video games? Call of Duty?

STEPHANIE
Why does that matter? What are-

NATIONAL REPORTER
Answer the question.

Stephanie just stares at the reporter. Another one takes advantage of the silence.

REPORTER #3
Where did he get the gun?

STEPHANIE
It, it was my gun.

NATIONAL REPORTER
Was it registered?

STEPHANIE
Yes, yes it was registered. I
bought it legally.

NATIONAL REPORTER
Why did you have a gun?

STEPHANIE
I'm a single mother who lives
alone with her child. Why do you
think I had a gun?

INFOWARS REPORTER
So you are for the second
amendment?

STEPHANIE
What?

CONNIE O'MALLEY
Did you neglect Luke?

STEPHANIE
What?

CONNIE O'MALLEY
Your husband is saying you didn't
take care of Luke.

NATIONAL REPORTER
Yeah he said "She spent more time
drinking wine than tucking Luke in
for bed."

STEPHANIE
Wha-When? I took great care of
Luke. I wasn't always drink-

Stephanie is getting frazzled. Nancy can sense the
reporters smelling blood. She tries to tug on Stephanie's
arm but she resist.

STEPHANIE (CONT'D)
I was the one here, ok? I was
taking care of him. He has no
right-

REPORTER #1
So you were always home for Luke?

STEPHANIE
I mean, I had to work, I, I tried
to be there as much as I-

NATIONAL REPORTER
Was Luke gay?

STEPHANIE
What? No. Not that I knew.

NATIONAL REPORTER
You don't know?

Nancy leans into Stephanie's ear.

NANCY
We have to stop.

Stephanie is still trying to regain control.

STEPHANIE
I didn't force him to tell me
everything. He was a quiet kid.
Kid's need space.

INFOWARS REPORTER
Where is Luke?

Everyone stops. All the eyes turn toward the man standing
toward the back of the crowd.

STEPHANIE
What are you talking about? He's-
he's dead.

INFOWARS REPORTER
We have reason to believe Luke
isn't actually deceased. That he
was just an actor.

STEPHANIE
What?

INFOWARS REPORTER
Where is he Mrs. Kazma?

This was the last straw. Stephanie turns and reenters her
house, Nancy on her heels.

The camera lights go off. The camera shutters stop.

Connie turns to Todd.

CONNIE O'MALLEY
Did we get that?

INT. STEPHANIE'S KITCHEN - DAY

Stephanie marches right into the kitchen. She is pacing back and forth in a mix of anger and shock.

Nancy tries to step toward her and grab her arm.

NANCY
I told you it wasn't-

STEPHANIE
Don't fucking touch me.

Stephanie sits down at the table. Labored breathing. Collecting herself.

STEPHANIE (CONT'D)
Just don't. Sorry.

NANCY
I knew they were going to do this.

STEPHANIE
There was nothing I could do.

Nancy sits down next to her.

NANCY
You don't have to do anything.
That's what I have been trying to
tell you.

STEPHANIE
He was my son. My son did this.

NANCY
It isn't him anymore.

STEPHANIE
Fuck.

She buries her face into her hands.

STEPHANIE (CONT'D)
It's never going to get better.

NANCY
You aren't the one who is going to
make it better. We just need to
come to terms with that.

Stephanie looks up into Nancy's eyes.

STEPHANIE

He was it. Now I can't even think about him. Out there he is a monster, I just, he is becoming one to me.

She shakes her head.

STEPHANIE (CONT'D)

I'm scared. I can't let it happen. He can't just be a monster, a ghost.

Nancy grabs a hold of her hand.

STEPHANIE (CONT'D)

I can't let them do that to him. I don't, he doesn't deserve that.

NANCY

Listen, I'll take off work-

STEPHANIE

No. I think I am going to have to do this alone.

NANCY

I'm not sure-

STEPHANIE

I'm sure.

Nancy let's go of her hand. She gives Stephanie one last look before getting up from the table.

NANCY

I just want to be here for you.

STEPHANIE

You don't owe me anything Nance. This isn't like when David left. We can't just power through, I've been trying, just trying to get everything done.

NANCY

Are you sure you can do this alone?

STEPHANIE

No, but if I can't I don't want to bring you down with me.

NANCY

Steph-

STEPHANIE
Just go. I love you Nance, but I
just need figure this out on my
own.

NANCY
I'm always a call away.

INT. STEPHANIE'S DREAM - NIGHT

Luke is now 20 yards away. Stephanie stands across from
him.

STEPHANIE
Please. Just leave.

Luke doesn't react.

STEPHANIE (CONT'D)
I can't keep doing this.

Nothing.

STEPHANIE (CONT'D)
I can't remember you like this.

In a blink Luke is now 10 yards away.

STEPHANIE (CONT'D)
No please. Just leave me.

Luke finally speaks, his voice echoes through the expansive
void.

LUKE
No.

STEPHANIE
Let me move on.

LUKE
No.

STEPHANIE
Please. I tried. I can't keep
going like this.

LUKE
No.

Stephanie is just tired. She has no tears left, no energy
to fight.

STEPHANIE
Please. Just leave me alone.

INT. STEPHANIE'S ROOM - NIGHT

Stephanie jolts awake. She turns on the bedside light. She turns the T.V. on. She watches the commercials play. She checks the clock next to her bed. 2:31.

EXT. SIDE STREET - NIGHT

Stephanie is jogging again. A car passes by but Stephanie doesn't try to hide. She is completely zoned out, just focusing on each stride.

EXT. INTERSECTION - NIGHT

Her route takes her to the same intersection from the day of the shooting. She stops, remembering that final drive with Luke.

Stephanie stops at the corner to catch her breath.

She looks up at the light.

Green.

She is running again.

EXT. TACOMA HIGH SCHOOL - NIGHT

Stephanie jogs up to the front steps of the high school. The front door is adorned with flowers. Within each arrangement is a picture of one of the victims.

Stephanie pulls on the front door. Locked.

She jogs back down the steps.

Around the corner she comes up to the side entrance, where she dropped Luke off.

She pulls on the door. It opens.

INT. TACOMA HIGH SCHOOL HALLWAY - NIGHT

Stephanie begins to wander the hallways. She turns a corner and one of the lockers catches her eye. It has a police evidence sticker taped on it.

Stephanie jogs down to the locker. She looks up at the security camera.

She opens up the locker.

There is barely anything left. A couple of textbooks. Stephanie begins taking things out, carefully placing them on the floor.

Textbooks, pens, notebooks. Stephanie flips through each, hoping to find some hidden message. It is all so, normal.

She picks up one of the notebooks. She holds it close to her chest.

Suddenly a flashlight shines on Stephanie. A COP is standing at the end of the hallway.

COP

Hey!

Stephanie freezes.

COP (CONT'D)

What are you doing here?

STEPHANIE

I'm sorry.

COP

This is still a crime scene.

STEPHANIE

Yes, I know I'm sorry.

The cop walks over to Stephanie.

STEPHANIE (CONT'D)

I just, I don't know. I'll leave.

Stephanie begins to clumsily put the books back into the locker.

COP

Why you going through this locker?
You aren't some kind of reporter
are you?

STEPHANIE

No, no, I'm Stephanie Kazma. I'm,
I'm Luke's mom.

COP

Oh... ok.

An awkward silence ensues. The cops radio goes off.

OFFICER (RADIO)
Hey, what's going on in there.

The cop hesitates, he looks at Stephanie. Her face goes white.

COP
Nothing, just a false alarm.

OFFICER (RADIO)
Alright get back out here then.
I'm trying to go home.

COP
Copy.

The cop gives Stephanie a heartfelt smile.

COP (CONT'D)
Just don't be sneaking around here
no more.

STEPHANIE
Thank you.

As the cop walks away.

COP
I'm serious. Not everyone is as
nice as me.

Stephanie is alone in the hallway. She looks back towards Luke's locker.

INT. CAFETERIA - NIGHT

Stephanie hasn't left yet. She walks into the cafeteria. Evidence flags mark bullet holes in the ground. She crouches down to inspect them.

Next to one she sees a bit of red. Blood.

She reels back in shock.

She looks around the room, making sure nobody is there.

INT. COMPUTER ROOM - NIGHT

A door creaks open. Stephanie creeps into the computer lab, the site of Luke's last stand. Nothing has been touched,

chairs are still overturned, desks are still stacked up as a barricade.

A corner of the room is taped off. Stephanie recognizes what is over there. A white outline of where the body of her son was, now browning blood stained against the wall.

She just stands over the scene, looking down at it. It is all very real.

She slowly sits down next to the tape outline of the body. She reaches her hand out toward it, like she was going to pet her son's arm.

STEPHANIE
It's ok. It's ok.

INT. STEPHANIE'S KITCHEN - DAY

Stephanie sits at the table, eating a cup of yogurt. She gets up and goes to the window. There is only one news truck left outside.

On the T.V. in the background she hears the familiar news jingle. She sees a picture of her at yesterday's press conference pop up on the screen.

Chet Loggerman breaks down the story.

CHET LOGGERMAN (ON T.V.)
Yesterday the mother of the
monster behind the Tacoma High
Massacre made her first public
statement to the media. She hoped
to shed some light on her son and-

Stephanie clicks the T.V. off. She doesn't want to hear what Chet had to say.

KNOCK KNOCK

Stephanie is hesitant to get the door.

DETECTIVE KEYTSONE (O.S.)
Mrs. Kazma, it's me. We need to
talk.

INT. STEPHANIE'S LIVING ROOM - DAY

Detective Keystone is sipping on some coffee. He reaches into his bag and pulls out a doughnut. He offers it to Stephanie, she just shakes her head.

DETECTIVE KEYTSONE
I heard about your little
adventure.

STEPHANIE
What?

DETECTIVE KEYTSONE
Down to Tacoma High last night.

Stephanie's face goes red.

DETECTIVE KEYTSONE (CONT'D)
It's ok, nobody is pressing
charges or nothin.

STEPHANIE
I'm sorry. I just, I don't even
know. I went for a run-

DETECTIVE KEYTSONE
I said it was fine, really. I just
came by to check in. And to
apologize.

STEPHANIE
For what?

DETECTIVE KEYTSONE
Last time we talked, I was under a
lot of stress. I wasn't exactly
the most, I don't know, let's just
say empathetic.

STEPHANIE
It is really fine. It's your job
right? Get the answers.

DETECTIVE KEYTSONE
What I said wasn't part of the
job.

He takes a sip of his coffee.

DETECTIVE KEYTSONE (CONT'D)
How have things been?

STEPHANIE
Fine.

DETECTIVE KEYTSONE
They don't feel fine. I'm a
detective you know, they gave me a
badge and everything.

Stephanie chuckles. Her first smile in seemingly forever.

DETECTIVE KEYTSONE (CONT'D)
I see what they are doing to you.
Those media people.

STEPHANIE
I shouldn't have done any of that.

DETECTIVE KEYTSONE
It's ok. But really, how are you?

STEPHANIE
I'm dying inside. I can't let him
go but every memory I have of him
has been, mutated. I don't know
how to do this.

DETECTIVE KEYTSONE
Nobody would know what to do in
your position. I know that doesn't
exactly help but nobody expects
you to fix this.

STEPHANIE
But then what? Do nothing. Don't I
owe somebody something?

DETECTIVE KEYTSONE
Listen, a lot of people are going
to want something from you,
answers, an interview, something.
Everyone wants something, what do
you want?

STEPHANIE
I don't really know.

The detective studies her face. He pulls another doughnut
out of the bag.

DETECTIVE KEYTSONE
Are you sure? My wife will kill me
if she finds out I ate all 12 by
myself.

Stephanie chuckles again, and accepts the doughnut.

EXT. STEPHANIE'S HOUSE - DAY

Stephanie is walking the detective out of the front door.
Before he walks down the driveway he turns to her.

DETECTIVE KEYTSONE
I'll be keeping an eye on you.

STEPHANIE
Ok.

DETECTIVE KEYTSONE
No more breaking and entering
either.

He hops into his car and drives off. Stephanie closes the door.

INT. STEPHANIE'S LIVING ROOM - NIGHT

Stephanie stretches in the living room, preparing for another late night run. She has her earphones in and is listening to a relaxing song.

She slowly breathes, concentrating on each stretch.

She walks to the front door but when she opens it a middle-aged man is standing there, MARK KAZMA.

STEPHANIE
Mark?

He walks right into her house.

MARK
I've been ringing the fucking
doorbell.

STEPHANIE
It doesn't work. Broke a couple
months ago.

MARK
Well fix it.

He heads right over to the kitchen table and sits down.

MARK (CONT'D)
Are you going to come talk?

Stephanie cautiously walks over to the table, slowly sitting down across from Mark.

MARK (CONT'D)
So?

STEPHANIE
What do you want to talk about?

MARK

What the fuck do you think? Your kid, our kid shoots up his fucking school and you never called me back.

STEPHANIE

It's been hectic-

MARK

Don't give me that bullshit. You've had time to go on T.V. and embarrass yourself.

STEPHANIE

I honestly haven't even thought about you.

MARK

Really?

Stephanie nods. Mark just laughs.

MARK (CONT'D)

I'm the kids fucking dad. I got my coworkers staring at me like-

STEPHANIE

You aren't his dad.

MARK

What?

STEPHANIE

When was the last time you came out to see him? Huh? Do you even remember?

MARK

I have my own life to lead. A life you have royally fucked by raising that fucking boy to be a murderer.

Stephanie just stares. She doesn't know if he is serious or not. She gets up.

MARK (CONT'D)

Where are you going?

STEPHANIE

I'm not going to sit here and have you insult how I raised my kid. You gave up that right.

Stephanie leans back over the table, getting in Mark's face.

STEPHANIE (CONT'D)

I loved him. I worked my ass off to provide for him. I tried my fucking best. That is more I can say about you.

MARK

So it's my fucking fault? Fine, he was your kid, you drove him to this. It is your fault.

STEPHANIE

Why did you talk to the media?

MARK

I had to set the story straight.

STEPHANIE

You had to get out ahead. Make sure the country didn't think you were some deadbeat dad who abandoned his kid with his crazy mother? Didn't want everyone to know the fucking truth.

MARK

I had to leave. Listen, I don't miss my payments, I didn't run off to fucking Mexico.

STEPHANIE

You live in New York. Mexico might be closer.

MARK

Just shut the fuck up, for two seconds.

STEPHANIE

Why did you come back now? You already gave your side of the story? Why are you in my fucking house?

MARK

I, I just..

Mark is almost embarrassed at the answer.

MARK (CONT'D)

I'm here so we can do an interview together. I really want to set all this straight.

STEPHANIE

You wanted me to sit there with you, and listen to you throw me under the fucking bus again.

MARK

You have only made all of this worse, don't you realize that? You fucked this all up.

STEPHANIE

Maybe I did, but at least I tried.
At least I-

Mark slams his fist onto the table. He is seething, he looks back up to Stephanie. She is not phased.

STEPHANIE (CONT'D)

Loved him.

A long pause. Mark doesn't really know what to do.

MARK

This was a fucking mistake. That fucking bitch.

He pushes his chair away from the table. He stands up and stares right at Stephanie, who is still standing over the table.

He walks right past her to the front door. He stops before leaving.

MARK (CONT'D)

You fucking killed him.

And with that last gut punch, Mark once again walks out of Stephanie's life.

Stephanie is left standing. She lets out a long breath. She closes her eyes, squeezing the table. She wants to scream, but doesn't.

EXT. STEPHANIE'S HOUSE - NIGHT

She walks over to the window. Mark is talking to somebody in the news van. He shakes his head, listens to what the people in the van have to say, and then slams his fist against the side of the door.

Mark storms off and Stephanie sees who was inside the van, Connie. She chases after Mark for a couple feet before giving up in a huff.

Connie back towards the house and sees Stephanie standing in the now open front door.

Stephanie marches across the lawn toward Connie.

CONNIE O'MALLEY
Mrs. Kazma, uh, how are you?

STEPHANIE
Cut the bullshit.

Stephanie stops, just at the edge of her front lawn. Connie nervously fidgets a few feet away from her.

CONNIE O'MALLEY
Care to comment?

STEPHANIE
What is all of this?

Connie tilts her head in confusion. Keeping up her T.V. persona.

CONNIE O'MALLEY
I, uh, work for the news. It's my job.

STEPHANIE
Oh really, it's your job.

Todd hops out of the back of the van. The large news camera perched on his shoulder.

STEPHANIE (CONT'D)
Don't you fucking dare.

Todd looks toward Connie. She meekly nods her head. He angles the lens down.

STEPHANIE (CONT'D)
What is all of this for you?

Connie begins to gather some confidence.

CONNIE O'MALLEY
Mrs. Kazma, do you not think this unspeakable tragedy your son committed is newsworthy?

STEPHANIE

Yeah, I think this tragedy is newsworthy. Do you think I am newsworthy?

CONNIE O'MALLEY

The people seem to think so.

STEPHANIE

Why? Why aren't people paying attention to those kids? The one's protesting.

CONNIE O'MALLEY

I can't speak for the people.

STEPHANIE

You do, it's your fucking job to speak for the people. You decide what they see.

CONNIE O'MALLEY

Well, me and my producers-

STEPHANIE

Just shut up.

Connie thinks for a couple seconds.

CONNIE O'MALLEY

People want some answers. They don't understand your son-

STEPHANIE

You don't understand my son.

CONNIE O'MALLEY

Then let me try to.

STEPHANIE

You've never tried. Every move you have made has been to hurt me, make me cry, make me lash out. You know that is what people want to see. They want to see the killer's family hurt.

Connie doesn't really know what to say.

STEPHANIE (CONT'D)

You obviously aren't a mother. I mean look at you. You don't care about me.

CONNIE O'MALLEY
Mrs. Kazma I am sorry if at any
point it appeared that-

STEPHANIE
You don't.

She points to Todd.

STEPHANIE (CONT'D)
He doesn't. Chet Loggerman
doesn't. You don't care about my
son, you just need him. You need a
monster to peddle out. You don't
care about the truth. The truth
might not fit into the story. You
are just looking for something,
something shocking, horrific.

Stephanie waits for a response. Todd tries to avert his
eyes. Connie twiddles with her fingers.

STEPHANIE (CONT'D)
You called Mark. Right?

CONNIE O'MALLEY
I just, I just hoped that if you-

STEPHANIE
Go fuck yourself.

Stephanie turns her attention towards Todd.

STEPHANIE (CONT'D)
And get this shit off of my
property. Now.

Stephanie turns around and storms back toward her house.
The door slams behind her.

Connie and Todd are frozen. Finally, Todd begins to shuffle
back toward the van, and begins packing his equipment back
into its case.

Connie stares at the house. She turns back toward Todd.

CONNIE O'MALLEY
Were you rolling?

INT. STEPHANIE'S LIVING ROOM - DAY

Stephanie is sitting on the couch. She looks out the window
and for the first time in awhile doesn't see a news van in

her front yard. She relaxes as she picks up the remote and turns the T.V.

Chet Loggerman is discussing something with a pair of pundits, both of them are clearly impressed by who they are talking about.

CHET LOGGERMAN (ON T.V.)
Do you think she actually had a point?

PUNDIT #1 (ON T.V.)
Oh definitely. She was well within her rights.

PUNDIT #2 (ON T.V.)
I agree. The way she has been treated, it must have been really wearing her down.

Suddenly the screen cuts to a still picture of Stephanie. Over it we hear her voice from last night, subtitles read what she is saying.

STEPHANIE (ON T.V.)
You do, it's your (BLEEP) job to speak for the people. You decide what they see.

CHET LOGGERMAN (ON T.V.)
Strong words for sure. I-

Stephanie turns the T.V. off. She begins to laugh to herself.

She gets up off of the couch.

EXT. SIDE STREET - DAY

Stephanie is jogging now in bright daylight. Cars drive past, people stroll by, the world is beginning to move on.

She controls her breathing, trying to keep in rhythm with each step.

EXT. TACOMA HIGH - DAY

Stephanie sprints past the high school. She stops and stares. Buses have finally started bringing kids back, students stand outside goofing around.

Mom's drop their sons and daughters off. They smile and wave as their children rush into the building.

Stephanie sits down on a nearby bench. She watches all of this and smiles.

EXT. STEPHANIE'S HOUSE - DAY

Stephanie turns the corner and begins jogging toward her home. She sees somebody sitting in front of her door.

She stops suddenly.

She slowly approaches, it is a teenage boy. Stephanie shuffles up to him.

STEPHANIE

Uh, excuse me?

The kid doesn't look up.

STEPHANIE (CONT'D)

Hello?

The kid looks up and reveals his face. It is Luke's friend, Chris. He sports a cut lip and a fading bruise.

CHRIS

Sorry. Hi Mrs. Kazma.

STEPHANIE

Oh Chris, what happened?

Stephanie kneels down next to Chris. Chris can only shake his head. She puts an arm around his shoulder and gives him a hug.

INT. STEPHANIE'S LIVING ROOM - DAY

Stephanie brings a glass of water over to Chris. He is extremely reluctant to make eye contact.

CHRIS

Thank you.

He takes a sip out of the glass as Stephanie sits down across from him. She studies Chris as he puts the glass and returns to staring at his shoes.

STEPHANIE

So, how have you been Chris?

CHRIS

I'm fine.

STEPHANIE
You don't look fine.

CHRIS
It is really ok.

STEPHANIE
Chris, please. Tell me.

Chris is unsure what to do next. He twiddles with his hands. His eyes dart around the room. His hand darts toward his pocket and he pulls out an envelope.

He begins palming it in his hands. Stephanie stares at the envelope.

STEPHANIE (CONT'D)
What is that?

Chris still just plays with it in his hands. He struggles to breathe, he is starting to tear up.

CHRIS
I'm really sorry.

STEPHANIE
No, Chris. There is nothing to be sorry about.

CHRIS
I should have brought this right over. I should have done something.

Stephanie gets out of her seat. She sits down next to Chris. She takes the envelope out of his hand and places it on the table. She puts an arm around him.

CHRIS (CONT'D)
He walked up to me and told me not to read it until I got home. I, I just kind of laughed at him. I really did. I didn't know what to do.

Chris is transfixed on the envelope.

CHRIS (CONT'D)
When I read it, I wanted to do anything. I wanted to call the police, I wanted to call you. But I didn't. I was scared of what they would do to him. I just sat in my room all night. I just sat there.

Stephanie places her hands around Chris' face. She forces him to make eye contact with her. His bloodshot eyes stare into hers. She wipes a tear from his cheek.

CHRIS (CONT'D)

I don't know why he chose me. Why this wasn't left for you. I, that isn't in there.

STEPHANIE

It is not your fault. It really isn't.

CHRIS

I'm just so sorry. I could have helped him. I could have helped you.

STEPHANIE

Chris, it is ok. I understand. I really do.

Chris looks back down at the envelope. He wipes his face and collects himself.

CHRIS

I've probably read it a hundred times. I want to say I just can't believe this was him. But I can. Even on Luke's best days I could tell he was hurting.

Stephanie is now starting to tear up hearing about her son as a human being again.

CHRIS (CONT'D)

He really did love you. I knew that and I hope that letter helps you know that. You should have had it this whole time I am sorry.

STEPHANIE

Chris.

Stephanie wraps her arms around Chris. He melts into her embrace. It seems like the first time in weeks he is able to let his guard down.

STEPHANIE (CONT'D)

You were his friend. His one true friend. I can never thank you enough for that.

CHRIS

I'm sorry.

STEPHANIE

If you ever need anything, my door
will always be open.

Chris breaks the hug. He gives a weak smile to Stephanie.
He gets up and starts to head toward the door. He stops
just as he is about to grab the handle.

CHRIS

Why he did it. That is all in the
letter. Just trust me.

With that Chris walks out the front door, leaving Stephanie
staring down at the crumpled envelope on the table.

INT. LUKE'S ROOM - DAY

Stephanie sits down at Luke's desk. The envelope is right
in front of her. She wants to open it but her body seems
reluctant.

She takes a deep breath. She studies Luke's room once more,
and then carefully slips the letter out of the envelope.

Her eyes dart across the paper. There are words scribbled
out, it is messy, hectic, emotional.

Stephanie puts the letter back down. She gets out of her
chair.

INT. STEPHANIE'S KITCHEN - DAY

Stephanie fills a glass of water for herself. Her hand
trembles as she brings it to her lips.

She breathes heavily.

She runs her hand under the water and splashes some onto
her face.

INT. LUKE'S ROOM - DAY

Stephanie is back at the desk. She skims the letter until a
sentence catches her eye.

LUKE (V.O)

*Chris, this next part is for my
mom. You don't have to read it.
Please find a way to get this to
her, don't let anyone else get
their hands on this.*

Stephanie puts a hand to her mouth as she reads the next section.

LUKE (V.O) (CONT'D)

*Mom, I'm sorry.
I don't really know what else to
say. I understand if you hate me,
I really do. I hope you know you
didn't force me to do this. I
don't even know if I can explain
what is forcing me to do this. I
go through life and no matter what
happens, I am unhappy. Something
is wrong with me. I'm hurt.
I appreciate everything you have
done for me. I love you and I hope
I didn't cause you harm. Please
forgive me.*

Stephanie takes the letter and holds it close to her chest, like it is a love poem.

She shuts her eyes, hugging the paper with all of her might.

INT. STEPHANIE'S KITCHEN - NIGHT

Stephanie cuts some vegetables at the counter. She checks the oven to make sure her chicken is cooking. She smiles as she sees the bird has begun to brown.

Minutes later she is at the table, a plate of chicken in front of her with a glass of wine to her right. She picks up her fork and knife and digs in.

INT. STEPHANIE'S BATHROOM - NIGHT

Stephanie washes her face with a towel. She looks up at the mirror and sees herself.

She smiles and reaches out to touch the reflection.

INT. STEPHANIE'S BEDROOM - NIGHT

Stephanie lies in bed. She looks over to the nightstand and stares at Luke's letter.

She closes her eyes and slowly drifts off into sleep.

INT. STEPHANIE'S DREAM - NIGHT

Luke is now in front of Stephanie. This isn't the Luke we have been seeing though, the one still brandishing his mortal wound.

This is YOUNG LUKE, back when he was still in middle school.

He looks up toward Stephanie.

YOUNG LUKE
I'm sorry mom.

Stephanie tears up a little.

She kneels down.

STEPHANIE
No, I'm sorry.

She gives Luke a big hug that he returns.

When they get up he is back to his teenage form.

LUKE
I didn't mean to hurt you.

STEPHANIE
I know. I know.

LUKE
I'm sorry for everything.

STEPHANIE
I needed to be there for you. I tried, I really did. I'm sorry if that wasn't enough. I wish I knew how to help you.

LUKE
Please forgive me.

STEPHANIE
Don't worry. Please don't.

She takes her hand and brushes the hair out of Luke's face. She looks at her son one last time.

INT. STEPHANIE'S BEDROOM - NIGHT

Stephanie lies awake. She looks over to the letter again. She smiles.

EXT. FITNESS WORLD PARKING LOT - DAY

Stephanie steps out of her car. She looks toward Fitness World. She takes a deep breath, checks herself in the car's mirror and heads toward the front door.

INT. FITNESS WORLD LOBBY - DAY

Stephanie walks up to the front desk and surprises Nancy.

STEPHANIE

Hey.

NANCY

Oh, wow. Hey.

Nancy doesn't really know what Stephanie's plan is.

STEPHANIE

I'm back.

NANCY

Yes, yes you are.

Awkward silence.

NANCY (CONT'D)

So, what exactly is your plan here?

STEPHANIE

I'm ready. I'm ready to just jump back into things.

NANCY

Ok? I mean, ok. I'm so happy you are back. Let me find you a class.

Stephanie smiles as she watches Nancy type away on the computer.

NANCY (CONT'D)

And it is looking like Jill is going to be late. Again. Needs somebody to cover her class at 11:30.

STEPHANIE

Awesome!

NANCY

Yeah.

Nancy wants to say something but when she sees the smile across Stephanie's face she can't bring herself too.

INT. FITNESS WORLD HALLWAY - DAY

Stephanie sits on a bench outside of the classroom. Her leg jitters at a furious pace. She tries to slow her breathing but it just causes her to tremble.

She fiddles with her fingers, scratching at her cuticles.

She looks up and sees some women approaching. She rushes into the room.

INT. FITNESS WORLD CLASSROOM - DAY

Stephanie sits on her bike at the front of the class. She begins to fiddle with the settings.

The group of women file in. They don't notice Stephanie at first. They take the last row of bikes in the back.

They gossip in a hush tone until one of WOMEN notices Stephanie. Stephanie looks up and their eyes lock. Stephanie gives a smile and wave.

The women reels and turns back toward the other women. They are now huddled around one woman in the back.

One by one they collect their things and begin to leave the classroom.

The last woman is revealed to be Mrs. Nunan. She scowls at Stephanie as she walks out.

Stephanie is left stunned. She doesn't really know what to do.

She sits on the bike.

Nobody is coming in.

She keeps sitting on the bike.

Nobody.

INT. FITNESS WORLD HALLWAY - DAY

Stephanie exits the classroom defeated. Nancy is right there waiting for her.

NANCY

I'm really sorry Steph. I should have said something. I knew they wouldn't-

STEPHANIE

It's fine. I get it.

NANCY

You were just so excited to be back. I am so happy for you to just be out and about. Screw it, I'll clock out right now and we can go, I don't know, get a drink or something. Why not?

STEPHANIE

I love you Nance.

INT. DIVE BAR - DAY

The pair of Stephanie and Nancy stick out among the group of people who would be drinking at noon on a weekday.

Nancy looks around in a mix of awe and disgust.

NANCY

This really seemed more fun in my head.

STEPHANIE

It is perfect. Really.

The two clink their glasses and take a sip.

STEPHANIE (CONT'D)

I'm thinking about leaving.

NANCY

Hey, c'mon. It is just one class. Before you know it things will get right back to normal.

Stephanie takes another sip. She stares ahead and thinks.

STEPHANIE

No, no it won't.

NANCY

I mean, I can ask around. I'm sure one of my friends knows of some opening around here.

STEPHANIE

When I meant leaving, I meant leaving leaving.

NANCY

Oh.

STEPHANIE

These people, it's just not going to be the same. It shouldn't be honestly. It can't be.

NANCY

Where are you going to go?

STEPHANIE

I haven't decided yet.

NANCY

Ok. Do you like, need help?

STEPHANIE

Nah, I don't think so.

NANCY

Ok.

Nancy looks at her friend. Stephanie looks back at her. Nancy reaches out and grabs her arm.

NANCY (CONT'D)

I'll miss you.

STEPHANIE

I'll miss you too.

The two both take sips of their drinks.

STEPHANIE (CONT'D)

First weekend you get off, promise to come visit.

NANCY

I don't even know where you are going.

STEPHANIE

So?

Nancy laughs. Stephanie laughs. They share the moment.

EXT. STEPHANIE'S HOUSE - DAY

Stephanie is loading boxes into a moving van. A couple of MOVERS carry boxes as well. Stephanie stops one of them, they are carrying a box labeled "LUKE"

Stephanie opens the top. The family picture is laying atop the rest of Luke's belongings. It is wrapped in a towel, protected for travel.

Stephanie picks it up and looks at it again. She runs a finger over Luke's face. She looks back at the house, taking a mental image.

INT. MOVING TRUCK - DAY

Stephanie drives the moving truck alone. A bag of fast food rest in the passenger seat. She picks out fries as she drives down the highway.

The sign ahead reads "COLORADO SPRINGS 25 MILES"

The radio switches to the same cheery pop song from Luke's last car ride to school.

Stephanie goes to switch the channel, but stops. She thinks for a second, and then turns the song up.

She bobs her head and looks at the landscape outside, sprawling mountains and a clear blue sky.

EXT. STEPHANIE'S NEW HOUSE - NIGHT

Stephanie arrives at a small one floor house. The trucks headlights illuminate the front yard. The house is bright white.

Stephanie gets out of the truck.

She stands in front of it with her hands on her hips. She just takes it all in, her new life.

Stephanie carries one box into the almost empty living room. She sets the box down, then sits on it. She looks over toward the T.V. which is plugged in but has been placed on the floor.

She crawls over and switches it on before returning to her makeshift chair.

She sits and stares as the colors of the screen light up the room.

INT. STEPHANIE'S NEW BEDROOM - DAY

Stephanie lies on a mattress that is resting on the floor. A couple pieces of a bed frame are partially put together to her right.

She lays on her side and looks up to the bedside table. Luke's family picture is set up on it. She peers up toward it and smiles before rolling back over and falling asleep.

EXT. COLORADO SPRINGS HIGH SCHOOL - DAY

Stephanie jogs past the high school. It is almost identical to Tacoma High. All the kids are laughing and goofing around outside before school starts.

EXT. COLORADO SPRINGS SIDE STREET - DAY

Stephanie continues to run. She paces by a woman and her toddler son, Stephanie smiles toward the mother.

INT. STEPHANIE'S NEW LIVING ROOM - DAY

Stephanie burst through the front door covered in sweat. She leaves her keys on a newly built key rack. The house is now almost completely furnished.

INT. STEPHANIE'S NEW KITCHEN - DAY

Stephanie goes into her fridge. She pulls out a bottle of water and begins chugging it down. She grabs a granola bar from the pantry.

She looks over to the microwave and sees it is 7:35. Her eyes go wide as she rushes back out the door.

INT. LOCAL GYM - DAY

Stephanie rushes through the front door of the small gym. It is much quainter than Fitness World. It is a single room with a couple machines and a dumbbell rack.

A couple old men lift their small 5 pound weights. ONE is actually smoking while doing so. This catches the attention of the front desk manager, MARKUS.

MARKUS

Hey, Leon. Come on man we talked about this.

LEON tries to hide his lit cigarette behind his back.

MARKUS (CONT'D)
Just put it out buddy.

Markus notices Stephanie.

MARKUS (CONT'D)
You're late.

STEPHANIE
Yeah, I know. I'm sorry. I just
lost track of time.

MARKUS
Ha, it's fine. I don't really give
a shit. I'm just dying to get out
of here.

STEPHANIE
Oh, yeah, no problem I can take
over.

Markus is already out from around the counter.

MARKUS
Perfect. I'll be back in a couple
hours.

He turns around back toward Leon.

MARKUS (CONT'D)
Make sure LEON, doesn't burn the
place down.

LEON
Screw you sonny boy.

Stephanie laughs as Markus hurries out of the door.
Stephanie steps behind the counter. She grabs a remote and
turns the T.V. on behind her.

She smiles as she logs into the computer. She checks the
sign in sheet and begins inputting names. A couple of
MIDDLE AGE WOMEN enter.

VERONICA steps towards the front desk.

VERONICA
Hello.

She hands Stephanie her gym membership card. Stephanie
takes it with a smile and begins putting the numbers into
the computer.

STEPHANIE
Hi, sorry, the swipe is down.

VERONICA
It is all good, I'm in no rush.

Veronica studies Stephanie.

VERONICA (CONT'D)
You are new here, right? I
definitely haven't seen you
before.

STEPHANIE
Oh, yeah. Just moved here a couple
weeks ago.

VERONICA
Oh, nice nice. If you ever need
somebody to show you around, I'm
your girl.

STEPHANIE
Well thank you. That is very-

Another woman, MARGARET, steps forward and grabs Veronica's
shoulder.

MARGARET
Oh my god, V, look.

Margaret points toward the T.V. behind Stephanie. All
Veronica and Stephanie turn around to see ambulances
rushing toward a nondescript high school.

The banner at the bottom of the screen reads

"SHOOTING AT ST. JAMES PREP"

VERONICA
That's so sad.

MARGARET
I know, and it's so close. I think
Maddy's niece goes there. She must
be going crazy right now.

VERONICA
I know, I couldn't even imagine.

Stephanie's eyes are glued to the T.V. An all too familiar
scene, body bags being carted away, S.W.A.T team members
circling the school, news crew rushing around.

VERONICA (CONT'D)
It's a crazy world.

Stephanie doesn't acknowledge them. She is just staring. A flush of memories overtaking her brain.

VERONICA (CONT'D)
Hey, are you ok?

Steph snaps out of it though.

STEPHANIE
Oh, yeah sorry.

MARGARET
Just terrible.

Margaret hands Stephanie her card.

STEPHANIE
Yeah, it really is.

She smiles as she hands back the card. The two women continue over to the gym's only two treadmills. Veronica waves as she passes.

Stephanie smiles back. She turns around and shuts the T.V. off. She gets back to work.

THE END